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ABSTRACT

The author discusses a career education program for secondary level disabled students and considers the role of the community and industry in improving educational services. Among seven issues which may be covered in a career development class are self awareness, career and personal assessment, career exploration, and career placement. Other program components advocated are work adjustment counseling; a referral system; followup services; and in-house counseling for personal, educational, and vocational difficulties. A counselor's role is considered, and vocational education's contributions are examined. The second part of the paper addresses ways in which educators can better prepare students for competitive employment by using the community and business as resources. Six suggestions are made regarding approaching employers considering hiring the handicapped. Preparation and actual techniques during an initial visit with an employer are discussed. Five job placement suggestions conclude the paper. (CL)

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CAREER EDUCATION AND WORKING WITH INDUSTRY

WORK for many of us symbolizes a four letter word. We curse it, slave over it, and constantly complain about "our lot in life," but there are few of us who would give it up. We cannot underestimate the importance of work in our everyday lives. Khalil Gibran defined work as "love made visible." He said "People work for a variety of reasons and get various rewards for their efforts. Work is a paradox. We work when we are hungry, and it is obvious we work when we are well fed, well clothed, and well housed. We typically devote half our waking hours to work. When we devote a significant amount of time to anything, we are implicitly assuming that it is important to do so." (Gibran, 1923.)

WORK has meaning for most of us for several reasons. One is our own personal identity. Who we are is often confronted by the question, "What do you do?". Our work is a reflection of our ultimate personality. What we choose to do for a living gives another person a wealth of knowledge and information about what we are as individuals. "Work is a major social device for our identification as adults." (Hagberg & Leider, 1978.) It offers us a place in society, a way to contribute, and a way to receive rewards. Work allows us social interaction, time for communication, and finding people with similar likes and dislikes. "Work is an economic necessity, but the symbolic importance far outweighs the financial impact." (Hagberg & Leider, 1978.)

WORK...is what we are preparing our students to do as a wave of career education classes spring up around the country. How do our students acquire the skills, knowledge, behavior, and attitude necessary to function in competitive

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employment? Where do they receive their training in survival skills? What types of training and guidance do we offer? How can we better prepare our disabled students to cope in a working environment? How can we give them better skills to interact socially, achieve academically, and be successful in a specific vocation? How do we make our students self-sufficient, independent, and proud of their accomplishments? How can we better their self-esteem, foresight, work behaviors, and improve their adult life?

WORK is competitive employment within industry and business. How can we use professionals as resources? How can we determine what the job market will be? What jobs are in demand? How can we get a student placed and offer him/her on-the-job training? How much is the employer willing to do? How do we approach an employer with a prospective client/student?

This paper will focus on two areas:

(1) Career education - "providing information, understanding, knowledge and skills that an individual needs in order to develop and plan long range goals inclusive of all life roles." (Shaw, 1976.)

(2) How we as educators can develop better programs for secondary schools by using the community and business as resources.

For purposes of definition, the emerging concept of Career Education as stated by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare is:

Career Education is for all individuals of all ages.

Career Education is more than vocational education but less than all education.

Career Education has a focus on the working role of individuals, but shows a relationship between work and other life roles.

Career Education is concerned with maximizing the self-fulfillment of individuals through economic and non-economic work activities.

Career Education is concerned with providing the goods and services needed by people in our society.

Career Education is the responsibility of both educational institutions and the community.

In the program studied here a very specific model for career education, which incorporated academics, vocational skills training, work-related issues (i.e., paying taxes, wages, time cards, etc.), leisure time activities, survival skills, as well as a Career Development Class was utilized. The class allowed students to explore the world of work through site visitations, written and audio-visual materials, role playing, and also supplied a wealth of information for those students who were preparing for a work-study assignment. Specific issues covered in the Career Development Class (Shaw, 1976.) were:

(1) self-awareness
(2) career and personal assessment
(3) career awareness
(4) career exploration
(5) career planning
(6) career preparation
(7) career placement

These issues can be described as follows:

Self-Awareness. Who am I? What are my likes and dislikes? Clarification of my values, understanding and identification of personal characteristics, and "prioritizing" important personal desires in the areas of financial, personal and social needs.

Career and Personal Assessment. Learning techniques for understanding and analyzing both their unique personality traits, and their areas of weakness. The student can begin to learn what areas need improvement and maybe begin

designing an individual program for themselves to progress.

Career Awareness. This area relates to the knowledge of jobs, and what the working world is all about. Different skill areas are matched with different job responsibilities. The student begins to learn about why people work, what the employer will expect, what are good work habits, and what their responsibilities will be on the job.

Career Exploration. This includes field trips to various businesses and industries, talking with personnel directors or career counselors, spending time in training school or involved in community volunteer work.

Career Planning. How does one reach the goals set forth for him or herself? What are the opportunities available? What skills does one need to improve? What behaviors must be upgraded to work within a competitive employment setting? Where does one go to receive the training or programming to acquire necessary skills?

Career Preparation. The student begins to meet some of the goals that were established in career planning (i.e., beginning training school, job skills training group, school program, data processing, etc.).

Career Placement. This encompasses taking the skills the student has acquired and matching those skills to a job that requires their use, then having the student begin the actual job.

The model is comprehensive and easy to sustain in a school system if there are other support services or programming being implemented. The variety of handicapping conditions will also vary the specific outline. For example, in a multiply handicapped deaf population, language was a big factor, as well as communication in determining what types of jobs the students would acquire and what areas of work adjustment skills were to be attained.

Along with the career education approach outlined above the program should allow for:

(1) Job development

(2) Job skills training

(a) Job-seeking skills

(b) Job-acquiring skills

(c) Job-maintaining skills

(3) Work adjustment counseling

(4) Referral system, or a job placement specialist

(5) Development of specific skill areas -- assessment and evaluation

(6) Coaching and supervision at the job site

(7) Follow-up services

(8) Support services (outside agencies)

(9) In-house counseling for personal, educational, and vocational difficulties (Zadney, 1979; Craig & Collins, 1970; Galvin, 1975.)

One of the strong points of the school system studied were the counselors who worked directly with the students at the various job sites. Many students functioned ideally knowing that they were receiving support from someone who was familiar to them, and not being left to the task alone. The counselors also intervened when the floor supervisors had a question relevant to the disability or particular needs of the individual students. Counselors had to often interpret between the supervisor and a particular student if there was a problem or if the student was doing a good job. Often times the employers suggested having a counselor work continuously at the industry site to work on problems quickly and efficiently, as well as to work closely with the students in developing their skill areas. This would benefit school systems greatly by gaining a knowledge of what business and industry is all about, learning employer expectations, understanding the details

of specific jobs, and thus being better able to prepare students to "fit in." An in-house counselor could handle the counseling and adjustment period from both an educational and an employer's point of view. This counselor could be responsible for:

(1) Screening and evaluation

(2) Initiation and preparation of client/student for the work-site

(3) Access to employers for various job openings and requirements

(4) Knowledge of various jobs and whether job requirements could be adjusted

(5) Knowledge of how to alter a job or restructure a task so that it could be performed by a disabled individual

(6) Matching client skills to job requirements (altered or unaltered)

(7) Support system for the client

(Zadney, 1979; Minton, 1977.)

The counselor would also have knowledge of affirmative action and how to help the company in implementing this policy effectively.

Consistently, many of the problems industry dealt with were of a minor nature, either involving communication breakdowns or students previously unexposed to a working environment and lacking in understanding of expectations. The student or supervisor may have only needed more information or further explanation. The problem areas that arose were predominantly not skill-based in nature but rather concerned areas such as: personal hygiene, attendance, tardiness, communication with boss or co-workers, lunch hours, overtime, or weekly pay -- but because the problem could not be explained adequately at the outset, it may have become exacerbated.

Vocational education, as stated by the Office of Education (H.E.W.) should provide entry-level employable skill training which is applicable to a wide range of areas. (This includes determining employment needs, examining the job market,

identifying occupations, anticipating future employment opportunities, training and re-training if necessary.) Vocational education should assist individuals in making informed and meaningful occupational choices. (There is a need for the student to be involved in the decision making process.) (Shaw, 1976.) The vocational education component should include coordination of services available to the student and geared to their choices, use of local advisory boards and collaboration between schools and training agencies. (Stanford, Rubin and Roessler, 1979; Johnson, 1979.)

Presently the needs in career education programs are:

(1) Having specific levels of student competencies so that they may upgrade the level of their vocational skills
   (a) Evaluative
   (b) Pre-vocational skills training
   (c) Vocational skills training
   (d) Structured employment (in-house jobs)
   (e) On-the-job training
(2) Increased collaboration between educators and businesses.
(3) Improvement in curriculum materials -- non-sexist, non-ageist, and allowing for increased job options. Because of the limited language skills of some disabled students, films historically used in the classroom have pictured small children, causing resentment in older students. Films should include portrayals of adolescents.
(4) Special techniques for infusing career development concepts into life career programs.
(5) Placement, career counseling and follow-up services provided.
(6) Work-study placements incorporated.

(7) In-service training of teachers and administrators on career development issues to gain more useful knowledge on how to implement programs.

(8) Counselors responsible for contacting industries, finding out what jobs are available, what the needs of the company are, so that the school system is training students in appropriate job skill areas.

(Heller, 1979.)

Industry's Perspective in "Hiring the Handicapped"

Part two of this paper includes a look at how educators can better prepare students for competitive employment by using the community and business as resources. Presently some of the concerns in placing students on the job are:

(1) Difficulty in student motivation

(2) Negative employer attitudes

(3) Lack of available jobs (within the student's skill area)

(4) Severity of client/student disability

(5) Architectural barriers

(6) Affirmative action (Shrey, 1980; Teff, 1979.)

(7) Industry taking on individual clients/students but not challenging them, or lowering their expectations for the "poor, disabled worker."

(8) Industry's lack of skill in interviewing a disabled worker:

(a) What words to use or not to use ("confined to a wheelchair," "crippled," "deaf and dumb"...)

(b) How to judge the applicant's skill level, what effect the disability will actually have on the person's abilities.

(c) How does one interview a deaf person? What services are available? How does a blind person fill out an application blank?

(9) Industry's unawareness of other services students receive and how those services can aid the company in helping the person become a better employee.

The recent affirmative action law to employ handicapped persons, Section 503 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that every employer doing business with the federal government under contract for more than $2,500 must take affirmative action to hire the handicapped individual. Those in industry are confused regarding this law (Shrey, 1980; Akabas, 1976.), a law which could be crucial to opening doors for our disabled workers. Nearly 50% of American businesses contract with the government, and contractors who have over $30,000 of federal money and over 50 employees must develop their own written affirmative action programs. It is mandatory that industry "hire the handicapped"; therefore, more and more agencies will need to increase their knowledge of the needs of the disabled. This could be advantageous to us as educators in placing disabled students in work-study positions where they will be benefitting society (i.e., paying taxes, employable, not receiving welfare), while we provide companies with information about the skills of our students to enable them to make a better choice in hiring. Industry may use schools as resources in the area of disability. The problem, to date, has been described thusly: "Industry is not prepared to meet the responsibilities of assessing a disabled person for potential employability, nor to develop career ladders within its organizations to accommodate the needs of handicapped workers. Industry does not have access to resources regarding the variety of disabling conditions and what impact that disability may have on job placement and productivity." (Teff, 1979; Shrey, 1980; Akabas, 1976; Clements, 1979.)

Industry is most often concerned with:

(1) How to implement affirmative action, what are the implications of this law.

(2) Lack of knowledge regarding various disabilities and how to anticipate job performance (Hoffman, 1971.)

(3) Lack of expertise in removing architectural barriers and job restructuring that is cost effective.

(4) How to interview a potential employee who is disabled (Jacobsen, 1978.)

(5) What kind of supervision to give a disabled worker.

(6) How other employees will be affected by having a disabled worker in their area.

(7) What about extra sick time needed by a disabled person for medical care?

(8) Misconceptions regarding the effect of handicapped workers on insurance protection costs, state industrial accident coverage, etc.

(9) Fear that the employee may be a "hazard on the job."

(10) Resistance expressed by the company training personnel and front-line supervisors.

(a) Not enough accurate information on the student/client being placed.

(b) Few if any follow-up service once the student/client is placed.

(c) No resource or contact person for the company to call if there is a problem with the placement.

As educators, we have the resources to help industry in hiring the handicapped. Industry must realize the facts regarding specific disabilities, and put aside some of their misconceptions (Jeff, 1979.) First, a company must realize it will not pay exorbitant Worker's Compensation or insurance rates due to a disabled employee. The U.S. Department of Labor has conducted studies showing that disabled workers have fewer disabling injuries than non-disabled workers exposed to the same hazards. Worker's Compensation rates are often based on the nature of accidents within the company and the employer's accident history and not on how many disabled individuals are employed by that organization. In actuality, the business may take a tax credit for having a certain percentage of their workforce who are disabled. Job adaptations or job restructuring can be done at a very low cost and only takes a bit of creativity and imagination. A lower workbench for a person in a wheelchair, teaching sign language to a supervisor so that he or

she may communicate with a deaf employee, stating clear, concise and accurate instructions to a mentally retarded person, installing a distaphone or developing jigs for blind individuals, widening doors, using braille and tactile signs, etc., are all minor adjustments that make it possible for a disabled person to function in competitive employment. (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1979.)

How Can We Approach Employers Who are Thinking about Hiring the Handicapped? (Petzy, 1979.)

(1) In-service workshops: having specialists come to the company to talk with employers about various disabilities and the potential of a disabled person for employment.

(2) Taking a highly successful candidate and placing him/her in industry where they have no previous experience in hiring the handicapped. If the employer witnesses success, he/she might be willing to try other handicapped clients/students.

(3) Stressing to employers that the majority of problems they encounter with their other employees are not in skill-related areas, but rather in areas such as: lack of motivation, attendance, tardiness, consistency at a task, "goofing off," personal appearance and hygiene, etc. and that the disabled worker should be viewed in terms of skills, as well as the above areas, to determine whether they are or will be a good employee. (Zadney, 1979.)

(4) Demonstrating/diagramming ways in which a job can be altered to suit the needs of a disabled person and the minimal cost of these alterations (e.g., height of a table, using pictures rather than written instructions). (Akabas, 1976.)

(5) Always referring to the positive things a client/student can do. If an employer asks about a specific skill one should be honest and if the client cannot perform the requisite task, that information should be backed up by a statement regarding something the client can do well (e.g., "No, my client cannot read, but with one demonstration he/she learns things quickly and easily.").

(6) Giving information regarding affirmative action, tax credits, medical coverage, and Worker's Compensation.

As educators and counselors we need to seek out various companies and find what their needs are in order to match career education programs and training to meet industry's job requirements. (Roessler and Rubin, 1979.) If we are to place an individual in a job we must first know as much as possible about the student/client, their skill areas, and their deficits. We may also need to give support to the student once placed, and act as consultant to the company if problems do arise. (Lofquist, 1969.) How can we seek out potential employers? What questions can we ask them? What considerations are necessary before visiting a potential employer?

The Employer Visit

What should one know before entering an industry or business? (Shrey, 1980.)

(1) The basic knowledge of the job market, what is out there, how to find it, and what kind of impression must be made.

(2) Appropriate appearance, attitude and manner are important.

(3) It is imperative to plan the employer visit, having a specific outline. Time is very important to a businessman, so one must be prepared to be clear, concise and quick in information gathering.

(4) Know the employer -- this cannot be stressed enough. Even if one only has a few facts about the company's activities it will show the initiative was taken to investigate, and the company representative may be more willing to explore one's interests. Sources of information on employers can be found:

(a) in the Yellow Pages

(b) from the Chamber of Commerce

(c) from the public employment service

(d) in newspaper ads

(e) in trade journals

(f) from labor unions

(g) from former employees

(h) from employer associations

(5) When you go to visit a potential employer you should draw up a specific outline including:

(a) purpose of the visit

(b) facts about the employer/business

(c) plan -- who to see, when to see, what to say; make an appointment!

(d) initial remarks should get attention of employer and arouse interest, then lead into the purpose of the visit

(e) utilize interview skills: attention, give facts, be armed with more facts for employer's objections, if any

What things should you find our from the employer? (Shrey, 1980.)

(1) Seasonality of the business

(2) Turnover rate

(3) Size and composition of the labor force

(4) Location of plant

(5) Means of transportation

(6) Recruitment practices

(7) Employer's hiring practices

(a) sex and age preference

(b) education and experience requirements

(c) apprenticeship and on-the-job training

(d) medical examination

(e) aptitude or proficiency testing

(f) work trial

(g) tool requirements

(8) Wage scale

(9) Hours of work

(10) Fringe benefits

(11) Lines of promotion and transfer

(12) Separation and re-hiring practices

(13) Observe atmosphere of business and other employees

After there has been some productive discussion it is important that you leave some information about your school or agency or even about a particular student if you feel comfortable in doing so.

(14) Send a thank you note to the employer; this will be remembered. (Bolles, 1974.)

Placing a Student

If you decide to place a student you must:

(1) Have an intensive review of the student's skills and interests, as well as knowing what deficits can be compensated for, and which skills the student may never be able to learn. (You don't want to set the student and/or company up for failure or frustration.)

(2) You must have constant personal contact with the student while he/she is going through job training, or at the onset of his/her placement.

(3) Follow-up services provided for client employed within company. What happens if the student makes an admirable adjustment initially, then falters several months later? The company will want to receive some assistance, and if follow-up services are not provided, one may nevertheless be held accountable for the placement. This could affect one's

reputation and/or future placement opportunities within the organization.

(4) Work adjustment group counseling. If this were provided within the school system for those students involved in work-study, many problems that occur at the job site could be handled within the school setting. A counselor who keeps in touch with the industry or business in which a student is placed can easily discover what areas present difficulties, and discuss them within a counseling group.

(5) The student must be given alternatives. He or she must realize that this is not the one and only placement available, and if difficulties do arise that cannot be rectified by counseling or skill training, other work sites exist. The student must realize that not all people stay in one job forever, and that exploring alternatives is very important in finding job satisfaction.

(Hoffman, 1971; Teff, 1979; Roessler, 1979; Molinaro, 1977.)

Summary

The needs of education and industry in creating a comprehensive placement program which will benefit both parties, as well as society, in giving an opportunity to disabled persons to contribute to the workforce, must be addressed. In this paper I have attempted to show how career education can be implemented into a secondary program now and how we can use industry as a resource to better our educational programs. What good will it do to train our students for jobs that do not exist? Or for jobs in which they cannot be placed? Also, business thrives on profit and trade. If industry opens its doors for placement, we can offer industry constructive help in understanding disability, knowing affirmative action laws and how to implement them, giving industry the opportunity to experience disabled persons and examine their potential as employees.

There are still many areas in career education that need further development. Below are several such areas. (Heller and Schilt, 1979.)

(1) Education and training programs must be developed that will better equip the student to meet the needs of competitive employment.

(2) Opportunities for better job training and preparation, more effective counseling, related to securing and maintaining employment.

(3) Educational publicity programs need to be developed and implemented on matters relating to employment of the handicapped.

(4) Professional people whose function it is to prepare the disabled person for an independent life must become aware of business and industry and their special problems.

(5) A higher degree of cooperation must exist between public and private sectors concerned with the welfare of the disabled.

(6) More research in the areas of:

(a) social skills, interpersonal skills necessary for appropriate work interaction and how to train students to acquire these skills;

(b) various levels of student potential and related job possibilities;

(c) industry's perceptions of the difficulties in hiring the multiply handicapped individual;

(d) evaluation and suggested work activities for specific disabilities;

(e) funding for major expenses of hiring the disabled (job restructuring, accessibility).

(7) A higher degree of expertise among counselors, who should understand industry and who can work between the business and the school to secure placements for students, do on-the-job counseling, and who have the ability to work on problem situations that may arise on the part of either the student or the business.

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This paper is written with the hopes of sharing some insight and information to other Career Development programs on Career Education, and using business and the community as resources to better our already existing programs. We need to understand industry and how it works so that we can better prepare our students to be competitively employed. As educators and counselors we have a lot to offer business in the way of educating them in affirmative action and how to best implement those laws, understanding disability, realizing the disabled are a valuable source for employment, learning how to hire, and work with schools in securing placements for multiply-handicapped students. Combined efforts between business and school systems are the only way we can sucessfully give our students the oppurtunity to be fully employed and contributors in society.

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